

JULY 17, 1976

THE OLYMPICS AND WORLD POLITICS

ANNCR: THE TWENTY-FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES GET (ARE) UNDERWAY IN MONTREAL IN THE MIDST OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE INTRUSION OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE: IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT POLITICS HAS INTRUDED ON A WORLD EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FREE OF SUCH EXTRANEOUS FACTORS. AS CONCEIVED BY THE ANCIENT GREEKS, THEIR OLYMPIADS WERE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOODWILL AMONG THEM. AS REVIVED AT THE END OF THE LAST CENTURY THIS HIGH AIM FORMED A KEYSTONE OF THE MODERN GAMES. BUT IN RECENT YEARS, THIS HIGH PRINCIPLE HAS BEEN VIOLATED IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SOME YEARS AGO BROUGHT TRAGEDY TO THE GAMES IN MUNICH AND NOW CLOUD THE ATMOSPHERE OF SPORTS FOR SPORTS SAKE IN MONTREAL. MOREOVER, DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING THE MONTREAL GAMES HAVE GENERATED WIDESPREAD CRITICISM IN SOME COUNTRIES, THE UNITED STATES INCLUDED, OVER CANADA'S ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S PARTICIPATION. THE HEART OF THE MATTER WAS A THREE-CORNERED CONTROVERSY AMONG THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPICS COMMITTEE ON THE ONE HAND AND THE TAIWAN GOVERNMENT ON THE OTHER. TAIWAN ON FRIDAY REJECTED A CANADIAN COMPROMISE FORMULA. UNDER IT, THE TAIWANESE ATHLETES WOULD HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GAMES, FLYING THEIR OWN FLAG AND PLAYING THEIR ANTHEM, BUT COULD NOT HAVE USED THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THEIR COUNTRY. (OPT) IT WAS A FORMULA TRIED ONCE BEFORE--IN THE ROME GAMES IN 1960 WHEN THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA CONSENTED TO THE I.O.C.'S LISTING OF ITS TEAM AS COMING FROM FORMOSA. (END OPT)

THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE TAIWANESE ATHLETES WAS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER CRISIS FRIDAY--A CRISIS WHICH RESULTS IN THE ABSENCE OF SEVERAL AFRICAN TEAMS FROM THE OLYMPICS LINE-UP THIS WEEKEND. THIS AROSE WHEN SEVERAL AFRICAN NATIONS THREATENED AN OLYMPICS BOYCOTT OVER NEW ZEALAND'S PARTICIPATION. THE AFRICANS WERE OBJECTING TO A NEW ZEALAND RUGBY TEAM'S TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA. (OPT) THE I.O.C. POINTED OUT THAT RUGBY IS NOT AN OLYMPIC SPORT AND THAT THEREFORE IT COULD NOT EXPEL NEW ZEALAND FROM THE MONTREAL GAMES. (END OPT) AT LEAST FIVE AFRICAN TEAMS WITHDREW FROM THE GAMES.

HERE IN WASHINGTON THE WHITE HOUSE REACTED STRONGLY TO THE CANADIAN-TAIWANESE CONTROVERSY AND THE WHOLE APPROACH OF POLITICS IN SPORTS. WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN NESSEN CHARGED THAT CANADA HAD VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE I.O.C. TO KEEP POLITICS OUT OF THE MONTREAL GAMES. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU IN TURN ACCUSED THE I.O.C. OF HAVING IGNORED CANADA'S REPEATED WARNINGS OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT TAIWAN'S PARTICIPATION. IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW HE SAID THAT THE CRISIS HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO DEVELOP WITHOUT ANY ACTION BY THE I.O.C. AT ANY RATE, UNITED STATES REACTION HAS BEEN CRITICAL. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER ANNOUNCED FRIDAY THAT HE HAD TURNED DOWN AN INVITATION TO ATTEND THE MONTREAL GAMES.

SO AS THE GAMES GET UNDERWAY IN THE CANADIAN CITY, THE CONTROVERSY OVER THEIR POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS HAS DEFEATED THE TRADITIONAL PURPOSE OF THE OLYMPICS--TO PROMOTE GOODWILL AMONG STATES. THIS IS THE DEPLORABLE ASPECT OF A SITUATION WHICH IS SADDENING DEVOTEES OF SPORTS NOT ONLY IN THE UNITED STATES BUT AROUND THE WORLD.

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